

What is Claimed is:

Sub A2 1. A system in which advertisements are displayed for users by an interactive television program guide implemented on user television equipment, comprising:

means for displaying the advertisements on the user television equipment with the interactive television program guide; and

means for collecting information on the usage of the advertisements in the interactive television program guide.

2. The system defined in claim 1 wherein the means for collecting information on the usage of the advertisements further comprises means for collecting information on the amount that the advertisements are displayed.

3. The system defined in claim 1 wherein the means for collecting information on the usage of the advertisements further comprises means for collecting information on the location in the program guide where the advertisements are displayed.

4. The system defined in claim 1 further comprising means for collecting information on which advertisements are displayed.

5. The system defined in claim 1 wherein the means for collecting information on the usage of the advertisements further comprises means for

collecting advertisement identifier information which identifies which advertisements are displayed.

6. The system defined in claim 1 wherein the means for collecting information on the usage of the advertisements further comprises means for collecting information on the number of times each advertisement is displayed.

7. The system defined in claim 1 wherein the means for collecting information on the usage of the advertisements further comprises means for collecting information on which program guide screens advertisements are displayed on.

8. The system defined in claim 1 wherein the means for collecting information on the usage of the advertisements further comprises means for collecting information on which screens are active when a given one of the advertisements is selected by one of the users.

9. The system defined in claim 1 wherein the means for collecting information on the usage of the advertisements further comprises means for collecting information on which user actions result directly from selection of a given one of the advertisements by one of the users.

10. The system defined in claim 1 wherein the means for collecting information on the usage of the advertisements further comprises means for

collecting information on the times that advertisements are displayed.

11. The system defined in claim 1 wherein the means for collecting information on the usage of the advertisements further comprises means for collecting information on the times that actions are taken automatically by the program guide.

12. The system defined in claim 1 further comprising means for collecting information on which screens are displayed by the program guide.

13. The system defined in claim 1 further comprising means for collecting screen identifier information that uniquely identifies which program guide screens are displayed by the program guide.

14. The system defined in claim 1 further comprising means for collecting information on the frequency with which certain program guide screens are displayed by the program guide.

15. The system defined in claim 1 further comprising means for collecting information on the duration for which program guide screens are displayed by the program guide.

16. The system defined in claim 1 further comprising means for collecting information on how users arrive at program guide screens in the program guide.

17. The system defined in claim 1 further comprising means for collecting information on which television programs are displayed on the user television equipment.

18. The system defined in claim 1 further comprising means for collecting information on whether a user interacts with the program guide during the display of a given program on the user television equipment.

19. The system defined in claim 1 further comprising means for collecting information on whether the user television equipment is muted during the display of a given program on the user television equipment.

20. The system defined in claim 1 further comprising means for collecting information on whether a screen overlay is present on the user television equipment during the display of a given program on the user television equipment.

21. The system defined in claim 1 further comprising means for collecting information on which non-program-guide applications are used on the user television equipment.

22. The system defined in claim 1 further comprising means for collecting information with the program guide on which non-program-guide applications are used on the user television equipment.

23. The system defined in claim 1 further comprising means for collecting information on how users invoke non-program-guide applications on the user television equipment.

24. The system defined in claim 1 further comprising means for collecting information on the amount that non-program-guide applications are used on the user television equipment.

25. The system defined in claim 1 wherein the advertisements are transmitted to the user television equipment from a television distribution facility, the system further comprising means for monitoring when advertisements are transmitted from the television distribution facility to the user television equipment.

26. The system defined in claim 1 wherein the advertisements are transmitted to the user television equipment from a television distribution facility, the system further comprising means for monitoring when advertisements that are transmitted from the television distribution facility are received at the user television equipment.

27. The system defined in claim 1 wherein the advertisements are transmitted to a television distribution facility from a main facility, the system further comprising means for monitoring when advertisements are transmitted from the main facility to the television distribution facility.

28. The system defined in claim 1 wherein the information that is collected on the usage of advertisements in the program guide is transmitted from the user television equipment to a data processing facility, the system further comprising means for filtering out less important information from the collected information prior to transmission of the collected information from the user television equipment.

29. The system defined in claim 1 wherein the information that is collected on the usage of advertisements in the program guide is transmitted from the user television equipment to a data processing facility, the system further comprising means for filtering out less important information from the collected information at the data processing facility.

30. The system defined in claim 1 further comprising filter means for filtering out less important information from the information collected on advertisement usage, the filter means being based on specific advertisements.

31. The system defined in claim 1 wherein the means for collecting information on advertisement usage further comprises means for collecting information for multiple user profiles.

32. The system defined in claim 1 further comprising:

means for collecting real-time ratings information; and

and means for displaying the real-time ratings information on the user television equipment.

33. The system defined in claim 1 wherein the means for collecting information on the usage of the advertisements further comprises means for collecting information on the usage of the advertisements in the interactive television program guide by substantially all users of the system.

34. The system defined in claim 1 wherein the means for collecting information on the usage of the advertisements further comprises means for collecting information on the usage of the advertisements in the interactive television program guide by a subset of users of the system.

Suba37 35. A method for monitoring advertisement usage in a system in which advertisements are displayed for users by an interactive television program guide implemented on user television equipment, comprising the steps of:

displaying the advertisements on the user television equipment with the interactive television program guide; and

collecting information on the usage of the advertisements in the interactive television program guide.

36. The method defined in claim 35 wherein the step of collecting information on the usage of the advertisements further comprises the step of collecting information on the amount that the advertisements are displayed.

37. The method defined in claim 35 wherein the step of collecting information on the usage of the advertisements further comprises the step of collecting information on the location in the program guide where the advertisements are displayed.

38. The method defined in claim 35 further comprising the step of collecting information on which advertisements are displayed.

39. The method defined in claim 35 wherein the step of collecting information on the usage of the advertisements further comprises the step of collecting advertisement identifier information which identifies which advertisements are displayed.

40. The method defined in claim 35 wherein the step of collecting information on the usage of the advertisements further comprises the step of collecting information on the number of times each advertisement is displayed.

41. The method defined in claim 35 wherein the step of collecting information on the usage of the advertisements further comprises the step of collecting

information on which program guide screens advertisements are displayed on.

42. The method defined in claim 35 wherein the step of collecting information on the usage of the advertisements further comprises the step of collecting information on which screens are active when a given one of the advertisements is selected by one of the users.

43. The method defined in claim 35 wherein the step of collecting information on the usage of the advertisements further comprises the step of collecting information on which user actions result directly from selection of a given one of the advertisements by one of the users.

44. The method defined in claim 35 wherein the step of collecting information on the usage of the advertisements further comprises the step of collecting information on the times that advertisements are displayed.

45. The method defined in claim 35 wherein the step of collecting information on the usage of the advertisements further comprises the step of collecting information on the times that actions are taken automatically by the program guide.

46. The method defined in claim 35 further comprising the step of collecting information on which screens are displayed by the program guide.

47. The method defined in claim 35 further comprising the step of collecting screen identifier information that uniquely identifies which program guide screens are displayed by the program guide.

48. The method defined in claim 35 further comprising the step of collecting information on the frequency with which certain program guide screens are displayed by the program guide.

49. The method defined in claim 35 further comprising the step of collecting information on the duration for which program guide screens are displayed by the program guide.

50. The method defined in claim 35 further comprising the step of collecting information on how users arrive at program guide screens in the program guide.

51. The method defined in claim 35 further comprising the step of collecting information on which television programs are displayed on the user television equipment.

52. The method defined in claim 35 further comprising the step of collecting information on whether a user interacts with the program guide during the display of a given program on the user television equipment.

53. The method defined in claim 35 further comprising the step of collecting information on whether the user television equipment is muted during the display of a given program on the user television equipment.

54. The method defined in claim 35 further comprising the step of collecting information on whether a screen overlay is present on the user television equipment during the display of a given program on the user television equipment.

55. The method defined in claim 35 further comprising the step of collecting information on which non-program-guide applications are used on the user television equipment.

56. The method defined in claim 35 further comprising the step of collecting information with the program guide on which non-program-guide applications are used on the user television equipment.

57. The method defined in claim 35 further comprising the step of collecting information on how users invoke non-program-guide applications on the user television equipment.

58. The method defined in claim 35 further comprising the step of collecting information on the amount that non-program-guide applications are used on the user television equipment.

59. The method defined in claim 35 wherein the advertisements are transmitted to the user television equipment from a television distribution facility, the method further comprising the step of monitoring when advertisements are transmitted from the television distribution facility to the user television equipment.

60. The method defined in claim 35 wherein the advertisements are transmitted to the user television equipment from a television distribution facility, the method further comprising the step of monitoring when advertisements that are transmitted from the television distribution facility are received at the user television equipment.

61. The method defined in claim 35 wherein the advertisements are transmitted to a television distribution facility from a main facility, the method further comprising the step of monitoring when advertisements are transmitted from the main facility to the television distribution facility.

62. The method defined in claim 35 wherein the information that is collected on the usage of advertisements in the program guide is transmitted from the user television equipment to a data processing facility, the method further comprising the step of filtering out less important information from the collected information prior to transmission of the collected information from the user television equipment.

63. The method defined in claim 35 wherein the information that is collected on the usage of advertisements in the program guide is transmitted from the user television equipment to a data processing facility, the method further comprising the step of filtering out less important information from the collected information at the data processing facility.

64. The method defined in claim 35 further comprising the step of filtering out less important information from the information collected on advertisement usage with a filter based on specific advertisements.

65. The method defined in claim 35 wherein the step of collecting information on advertisement usage further comprises the step of collecting information for multiple user profiles.

66. The method defined in claim 35 further comprising the steps of:

collecting real-time ratings information; and

displaying the real-time ratings information on the user television equipment.

67. The method defined in claim 35 wherein the step of collecting information on the usage of the advertisements further comprises the step of collecting information on the usage of the advertisements in the interactive television program guide by substantially all users of the system.

68. The method defined in claim 35 wherein the step of collecting information on the usage of the advertisements further comprises the step of collecting information on the usage of the advertisements in the interactive television program guide by a subset of users of the system.

69. A system for providing real-time ratings to users, comprising:

means for collecting real-time ratings information based on the activities of users at user television equipment; and

means for displaying the real-time ratings information on the user television equipment in real time.

70. The system defined in claim 69 further comprising means for providing an opportunity for defining a time frame for the real-time ratings.

71. The system defined in claim 70 wherein the means for providing the opportunity for defining the time frame for the real-time ratings comprises means for providing an opportunity for defining a time frame of this hour for the real-time ratings.

72. The system defined in claim 70 wherein the means for providing the opportunity for defining the time frame for the real-time ratings comprises means for providing an opportunity for defining a time frame of this evening for the real-time ratings.

73. The system defined in claim 70 wherein the means for providing the opportunity for defining the time frame for the real-time ratings comprises means for providing an opportunity for defining a time frame of today for the real-time ratings.

74. The system defined in claim 70 wherein the means for providing the opportunity for defining the time frame for the real-time ratings further comprises means for providing an opportunity for defining a time frame of this week for the real-time ratings.

75. The system defined in claim 70 wherein the means for providing the opportunity for defining the time frame for the real-time ratings further comprises means for providing an opportunity for defining a time frame of this instant for the real-time ratings.

76. The system defined in claim 69 further comprising means for providing an opportunity for selecting a geographic area for the real-time ratings.

77. The system defined in claim 69 further comprising means for providing an opportunity for selecting a genre for the real-time ratings.

78. The system defined in claim 69 further comprising means for providing an opportunity for selecting whether the real-time ratings are for television programs.

79. The system defined in claim 69 further comprising means for providing an opportunity for selecting whether the real-time ratings are for applications.

80. The system defined in claim 69 further comprising means for providing an opportunity for selecting whether the real-time ratings are for non-program-guide applications.

81. The system defined in claim 69 further comprising means for providing an opportunity for selecting whether the real-time ratings are for video games.

82. The system defined in claim 69 wherein the means for displaying the real-time ratings information comprises means for displaying real-time television program ratings.

83. The system defined in claim 69 wherein the means for displaying the real-time ratings information comprises means for displaying real-time video game ratings.

84. The system defined in claim 69 wherein the means for displaying the real-time ratings information comprises means for displaying real-time ratings for a time period of this evening.

85. The system defined in claim 69 wherein the means for displaying the real-time ratings

information comprises means for displaying real-time ratings for a time period of this instant.

86. The system defined in claim 69 further comprising means for allowing each user to select which type of real-time ratings are displayed.

87. The system defined in claim 69 wherein the means for collecting the real-time ratings information comprises means for collecting information on whether a muting function is used when certain programs are watched.

88. The system defined in claim 69 wherein the means for collecting the real-time ratings information comprises means for collecting information on whether any portion of the video of a program is blocked as that program is watched.

89. The system defined in claim 69 wherein the real-time ratings information comprises a list of programs, the system further comprising means for selecting one of the programs to purchase.

90. The system defined in claim 69 wherein the real-time ratings information comprises a list of programs, the system further comprising means for selecting one of the programs to set a reminder for that program.

91. The system defined in claim 69 wherein the real-time ratings information comprises a list of

programs, the system further comprising means for selecting one of the programs to record.

92. A method for providing real-time ratings to users, comprising the steps of:

collecting real-time ratings information based on the activities of users at user television equipment; and

displaying the real-time ratings information on the user television equipment in real time.

93. The method defined in claim 92 further comprising the step of providing an opportunity for defining a time frame for the real-time ratings.

94. The method defined in claim 93 wherein the step of providing the opportunity for defining the time frame for the real-time ratings comprises the step of providing an opportunity for defining a time frame of this hour for the real-time ratings.

95. The method defined in claim 93 wherein the step of providing the opportunity for defining the time frame for the real-time ratings comprises the step of providing an opportunity for defining a time frame of this evening for the real-time ratings.

96. The method defined in claim 93 wherein the step of providing the opportunity for defining the time frame for the real-time ratings comprises the step

of providing an opportunity for defining a time frame of today for the real-time ratings.

97. The method defined in claim 93 wherein the step of providing the opportunity for defining the time frame for the real-time ratings further comprises the step of providing an opportunity for defining a time frame of this week for the real-time ratings.

98. The method defined in claim 93 wherein the step of providing the opportunity for defining the time frame for the real-time ratings further comprises the step of providing an opportunity for defining a time frame of this instant for the real-time ratings.

99. The method defined in claim 92 further comprising the step of providing an opportunity for selecting a geographic area for the real-time ratings.

100. The method defined in claim 92 further comprising the step of providing an opportunity for selecting a genre for the real-time ratings.

101. The method defined in claim 92 further comprising the step of providing an opportunity for selecting whether the real-time ratings are for television programs.

102. The method defined in claim 92 further comprising the step of providing an opportunity for selecting whether the real-time ratings are for applications.

103. The method defined in claim 92 further comprising the step of providing an opportunity for selecting whether the real-time ratings are for non-program-guide applications.

104. The method defined in claim 92 further comprising the step of providing an opportunity for selecting whether the real-time ratings are for video games.

105. The method defined in claim 92 wherein the step of displaying the real-time ratings information comprises the step of displaying real-time television program ratings.

106. The method defined in claim 92 wherein the step of displaying the real-time ratings information comprises the step of displaying real-time video game ratings.

107. The method defined in claim 92 wherein the step of displaying the real-time ratings information comprises the step of displaying real-time ratings for a time period of this evening.

108. The method defined in claim 92 wherein the step of displaying the real-time ratings information comprises the step of displaying real-time ratings for a time period of this instant.

109. The method defined in claim 92 further comprising the step of allowing each user to select which type of real-time ratings are displayed.

110. The method defined in claim 92 wherein the step of collecting the real-time ratings information comprises the step of collecting information on whether a muting function is used when certain programs are watched.

111. The method defined in claim 92 wherein the step of collecting the real-time ratings information comprises the step of collecting information on whether any portion of the video of a program is blocked as that program is being watched.

112. The method defined in claim 92 wherein the real-time ratings information comprises a list of programs, the method further comprising the step of selecting one of the programs to purchase.

113. The method defined in claim 92 wherein the real-time ratings information comprises a list of programs, the method further comprising the step of selecting one of the programs to set a reminder for that program.

114. The method defined in claim 92 wherein the real-time ratings information comprises a list of programs, the method further comprising the step of selecting one of the programs to record.

115. A system in which an interactive television program guide is implemented on user television equipment, comprising:

means for displaying program guide display screens on the user television equipment with the interactive television program guide; and

means for collecting information on which program guide display screens are displayed in the interactive television program guide.

116. A method for using a system in which an interactive television program guide is implemented on user television equipment, comprising the steps of:

displaying program guide display screens on the user television equipment with the interactive television program guide; and

collecting information on which program guide display screens are displayed in the interactive television program guide.

117. A system in which an interactive television program guide is implemented on user television equipment, comprising:

means for providing an opportunity for a user to use non-program-guide applications on the user television equipment; and

means for collecting information with the interactive television program guide on which non-program guide applications are used.

118. A method for using a system in which an interactive television program guide is implemented on user television equipment, comprising the steps of:

providing an opportunity for a user to use non-program-guide applications on the user television equipment; and

collecting information with the interactive television program guide on which non-program guide applications are used.